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Presentation at Penn Urban Studies Colloquium: Delhi, the Invisible City

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Delhi, the Invisible City: Work, Housing and Informality



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Work in India Today

Formal Sector Employment: 8%

Informal Sector Employment: 92%

How can 92% of anything
be defined by
what it is NOT?

(source: National Sample Survey data)

Delhi: Work and the Urban Economy

In the last 20 years, cities across India, including Delhi, India's capital, have de-industrialized with a demise of the factory form.

Work has not been moving from agriculture to industry

If most of India's economy is "Unorganized" or "Informal", those negatively-defined concepts consign the majority of economic activity to a conceptual void

Vast areas of contemporary economic activity which happen in this void remain UNSEEN, because they fit no expected conceptual form

Modernization Theory

People:

Migration from Village → City

Work:

Agriculture → Formal Industry (Big
Factories, SEZ, Call Centers)

City:

Traditional Disorder (Old Delhi) →
Planned Modern Order (New Delhi)

The Empirics: Urbanization Yes, Industry and Planned Order No

- People: Moving to Cities. Villages also Urbanizing.
- Work: Deindustrialization across Metros; Growth in Informal Jobs
- City: Growth of the “Invisible City”

Work in Delhi: A Review

76% of Establishments are Informal

97.5% of Establishments employ less than 10 persons
(only 0.5% are under the Factories Act)

96.8% of Establishments “Self-Financing” - use
Informal Sources of Capital
(NOT Financed by Banks, Govt, NGOs, Moneylender, etc.)

Source: Economic Census of Delhi (2005)

Delhi: The Planned City?

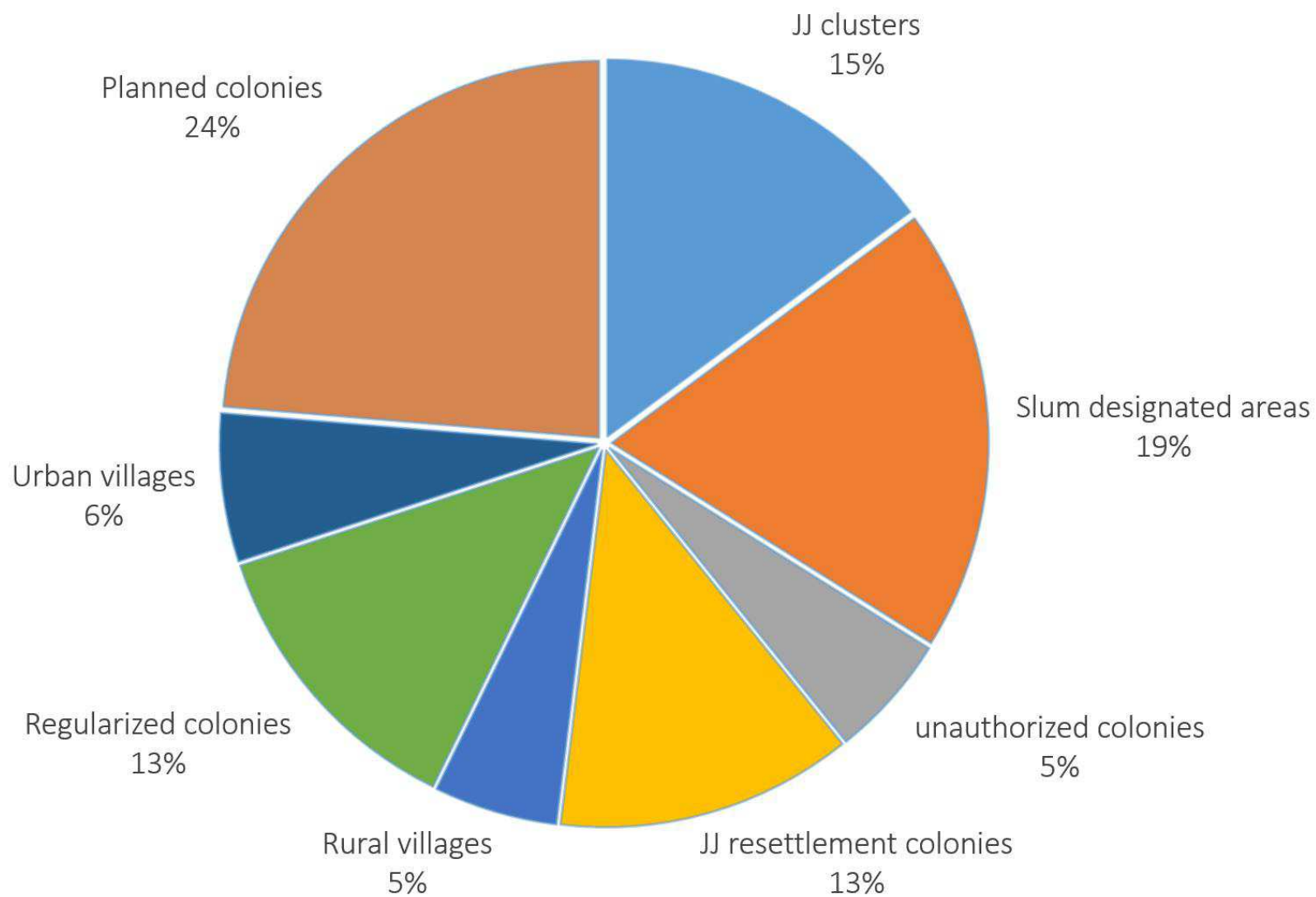
1995 Data:

Less than 12% of Residential Space is
in Master Planned Areas

Less than 5% of firms in Delhi are in
Master Planned areas.

(Source: Solomon Benjamin (2005))

Economic survey of Delhi 2001-2002 (Planning department, Govt. of Delhi)



Taimoor Nagar, New Delhi

Roughly 1 square mile area

Includes Four Types of Localities:

1. “Planned Colony”
2. “Urban Village”
3. “Jhuggi Jhonpri Cluster” (Squatter Colony)
4. “Unauthorized Colony”

As anthropologists,
political theorists and architects,
we felt that we needed
new interdisciplinary ways of
looking at empirics.

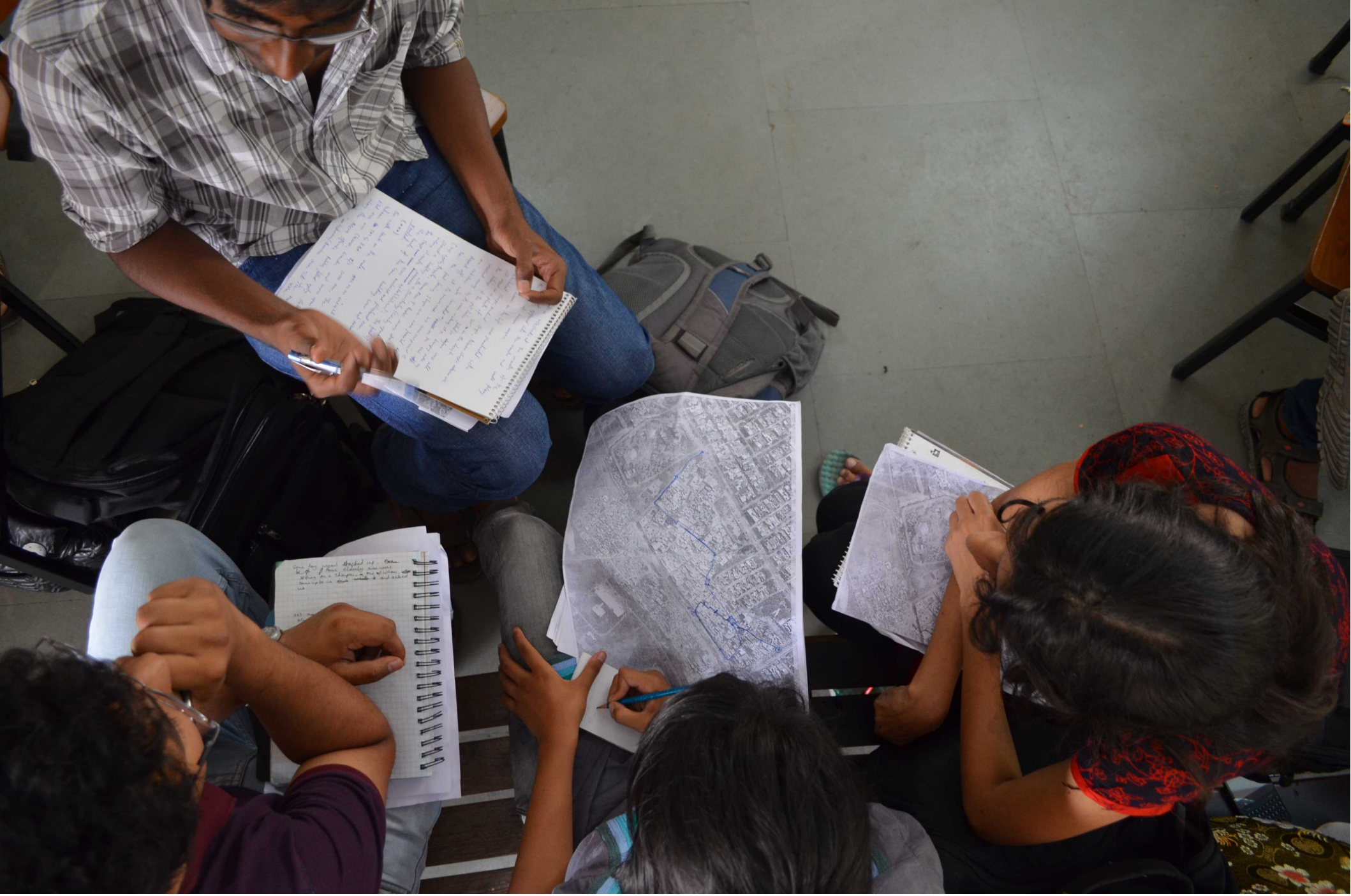
We attempted to examine how
Economics, Politics and Space
are connected.

WE ALL LIVE IN TAIMOOR NAGAR











INVESTIGATION 1: ARCHITECTURE OF THE ORDINARY

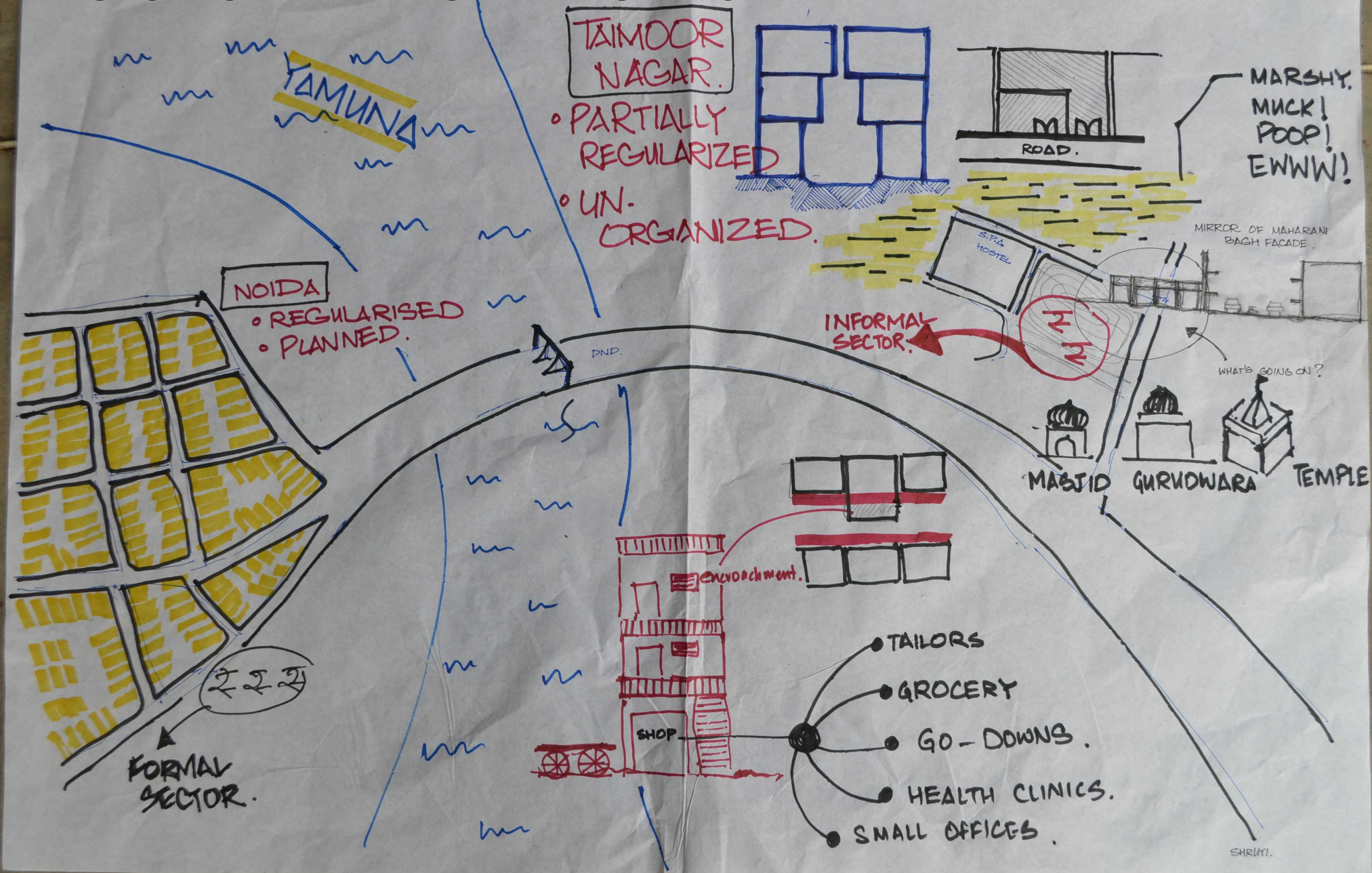
The city outside of the Masterplan is very 'invisible' to the residents of the planned city, in representation by people like us. Sometimes this 'invisibility' of the subject is actually denial of the viewer.
This workshop is about WAYS OF SEEING the city.



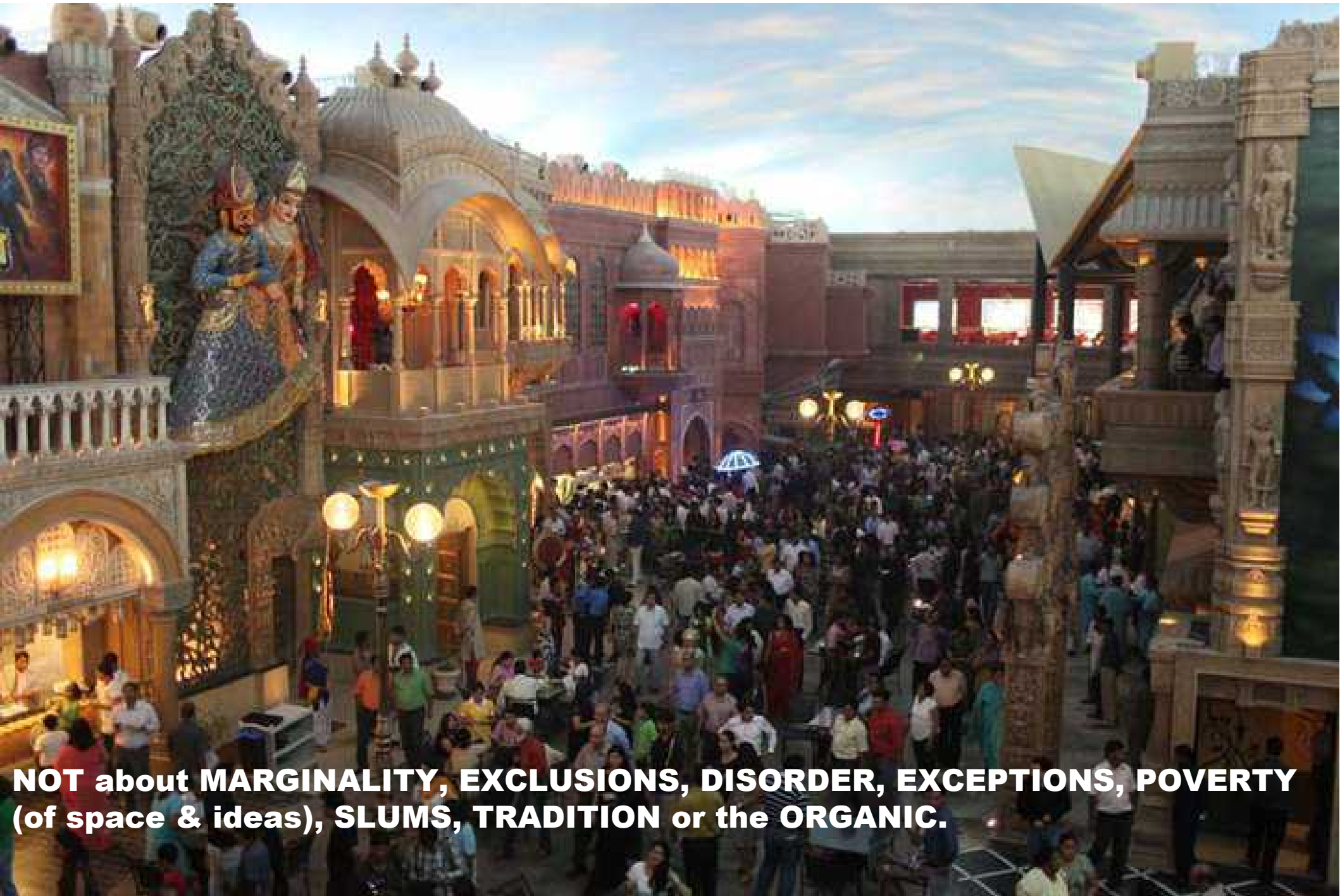
INVESTIGATION 2: MAPPING THE INVISIBLE CITY



INVESTIGATION 2: MAPPING THE INVISIBLE CITY



INVESTIGATION 3: NARRATIVES OF THE CITY



NOT about MARGINALITY, EXCLUSIONS, DISORDER, EXCEPTIONS, POVERTY (of space & ideas), SLUMS, TRADITION or the ORGANIC.

INVESTIGATION 4: LANGUAGE OF THE INVISIBLE CITY



INVESTIGATION 4: LANGUAGE OF THE INVISIBLE CITY

"We walked into taimoor nagar, as i introduce Manish to the familiar shops along the edge of the village. The edge that our hostel students frequent. Moti, Moti mobile, and our very own hair cut salon. We walk past the familiar sights of kabadi walas. All eyes go past us without taking much notice. We are still Part of the Fabric.

We turn left onto the a road 2-3 meters in width, and immediately the variation in the housing typology catches our attention. A fancy modernist-ish looking house with glass doors and an attractive facade. A 'tasteful' color choice and wooden paneling along with granite floors and walls. All this right next a dingy moist and dark public school, a Salon and an internet cafe. All the shops are single window shops of 10 feet by 10 feet. The walls of most houses are plastered. We turn right onto a road that we presumed would lead us to the naala. AT the corner was a chowpal. We ask a kid what the chowpal was "mereko nahi pata" (i do not know) he said. An elderly lady rushes into our conversation and asks "kya puch rahe ho us se?" (what are you asking him?) After we explained that we were from the hostel itself, and that we were students, she went on to explain her idea of a chow pal. she explained that it was a place for tired people to rest and talk. We catch a rickshaw at the mouth of the gully that opened to the naala, and rode and rode along the edge of taimoor nagar. The houses on the left were punctuated with electrical shops medical shops telecom shops eateries etc. All the buildings were raised on a plinth of atleast 30". The filling of the potholes were done by the residents with construction waste, reports our rickshaw wala, commenting with regret how the rain washed it away...."

INVESTIGATION 5: ACCESS TO THE CITY



INVESTIGATION 6: SURVEYING THE INVISIBLE CITY





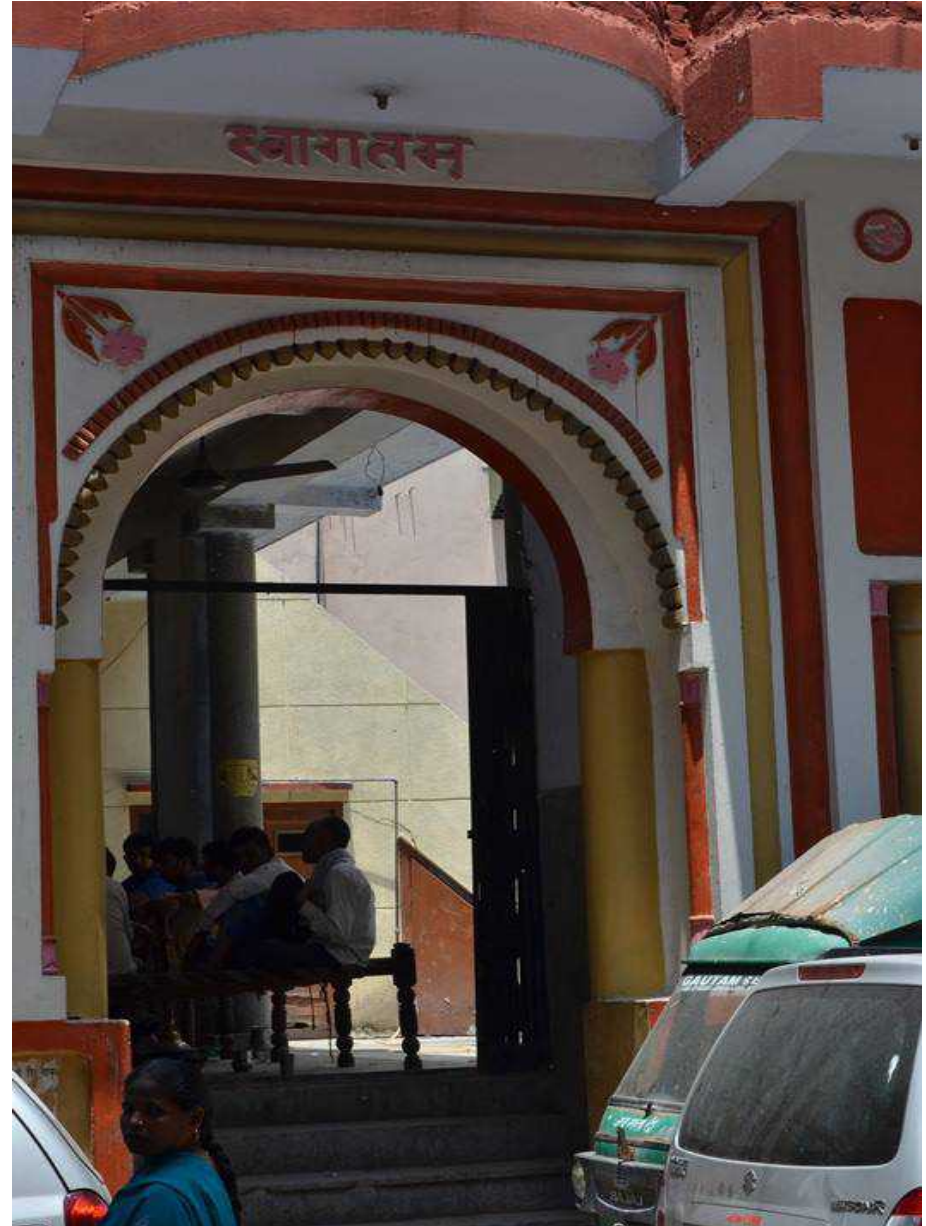


IT'S A WORK IN PROGRESS

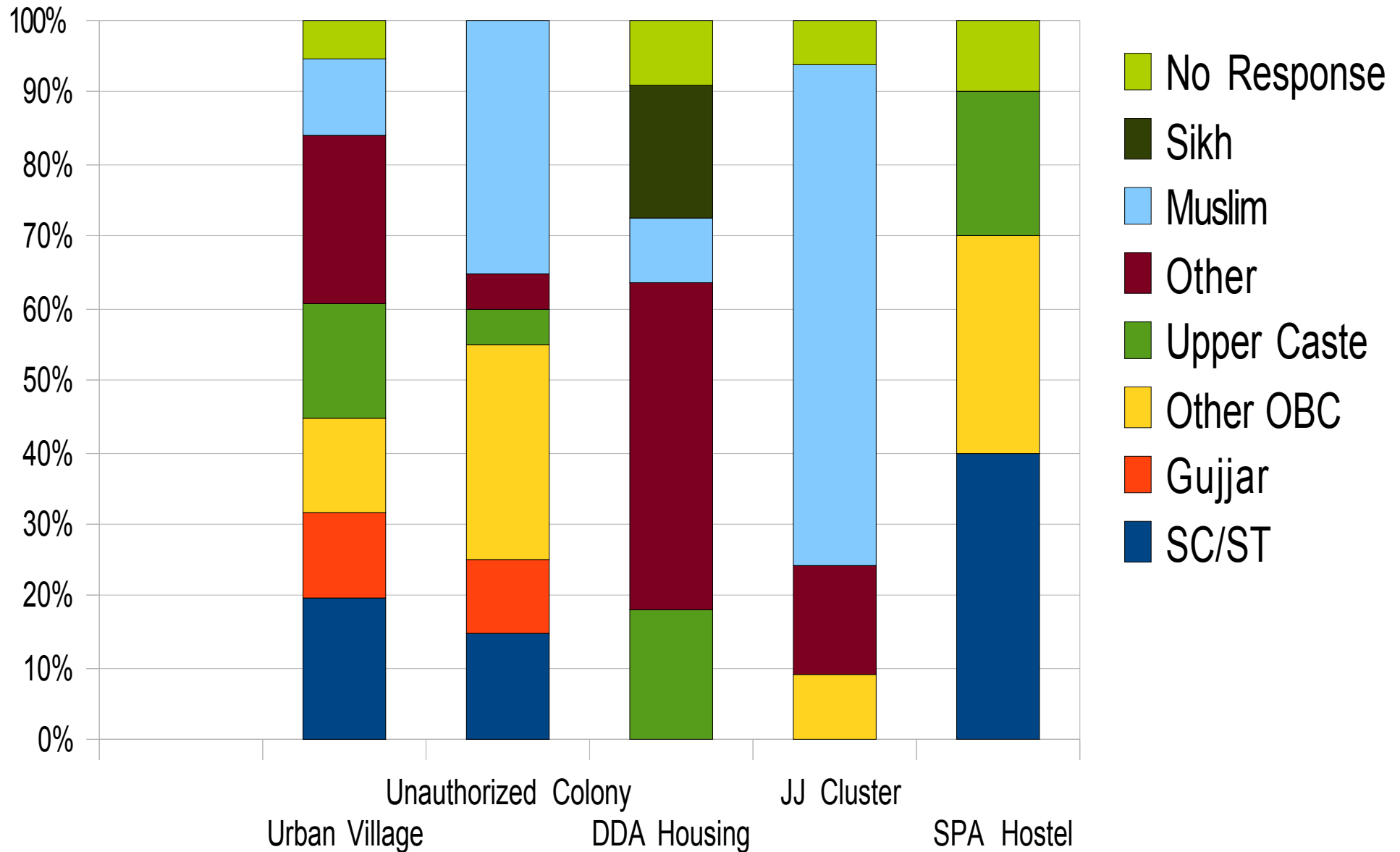
Access to the City

Four Types of Localities in Taimoor Nagar, New Delhi

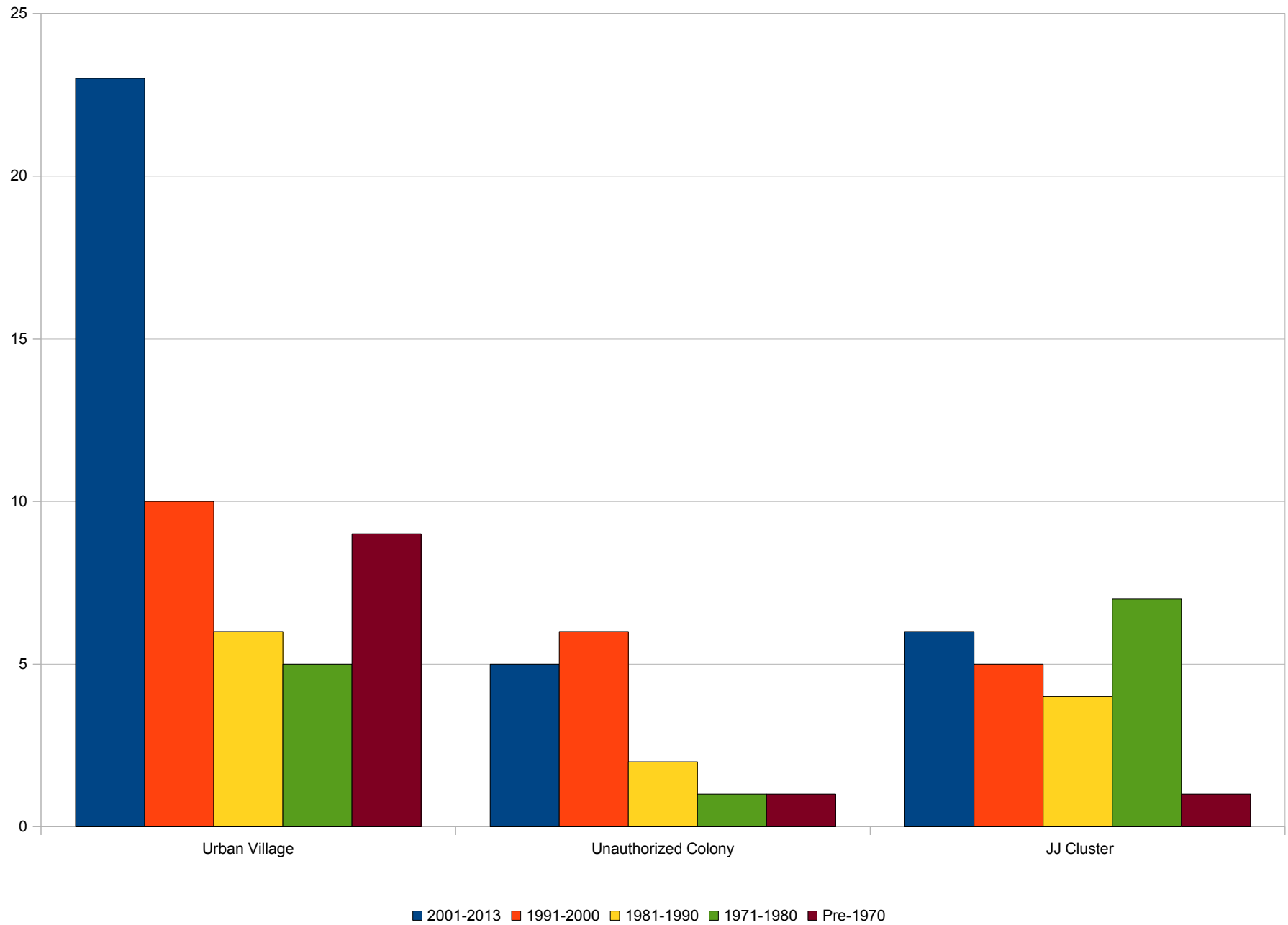
1. “Planned Colony”
2. “Urban Village”
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Religion and Caste by Locality



When I Came to Delhi



Spaces of Accommodation

- Delhi is now a city of Migrants: More migration to Delhi in last 20 years than to Bombay or any other Indian city
- Since First Master Plan (1961) 45% of all government housing was to be built for low-income groups. In reality only a fraction have been built in planned colonies.
- The Low-Income Housing that HAS been built by the state in Taimoor Nagar looks like this...





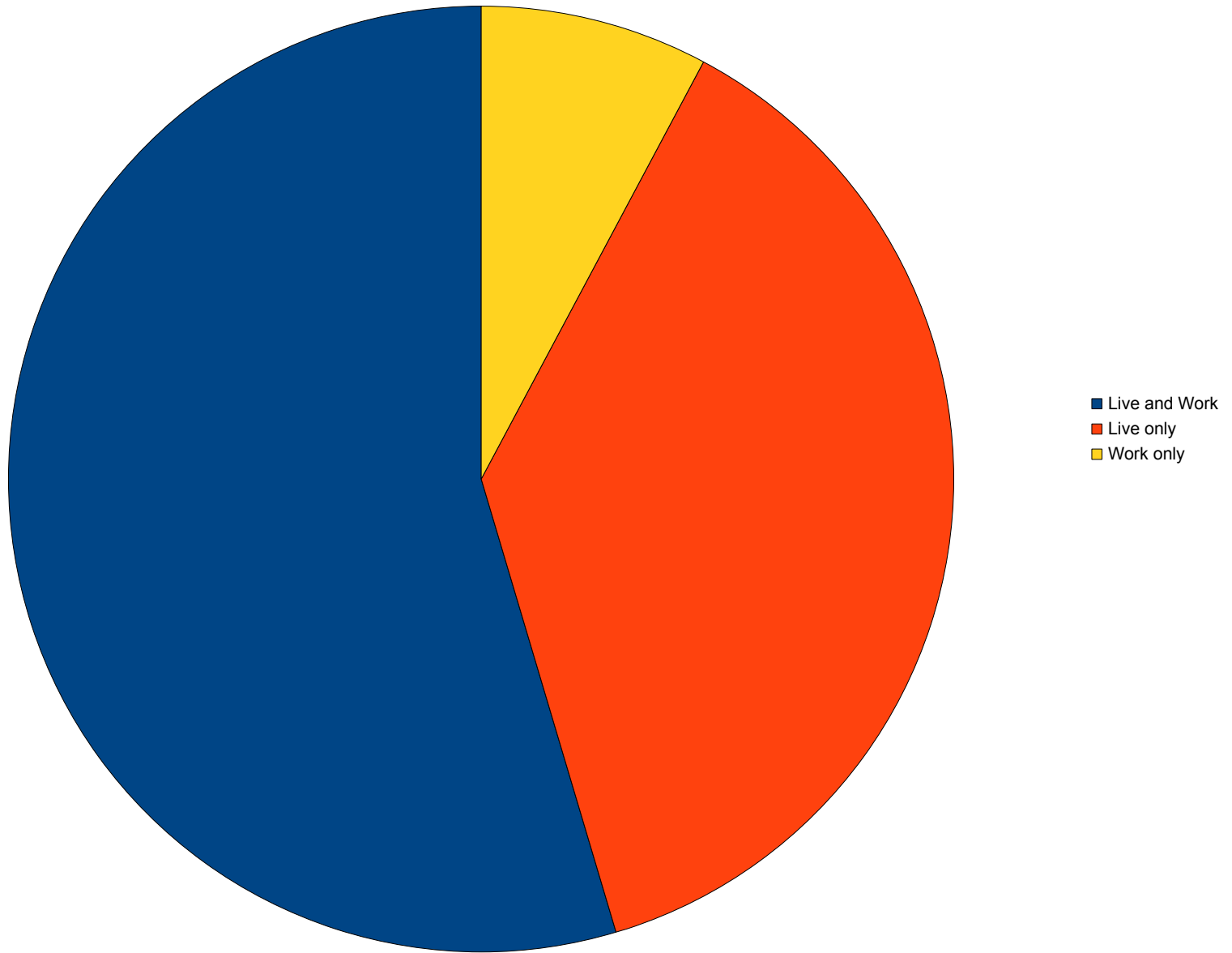
Sachets of Housing

- Most shampoo sales in India are in sachets, not bottles
- May be more costly per unit weight, but the Size is Right
- Rs 2000 (\$35) for one-room rental units in Urban Village
- One building has up to 84 such units

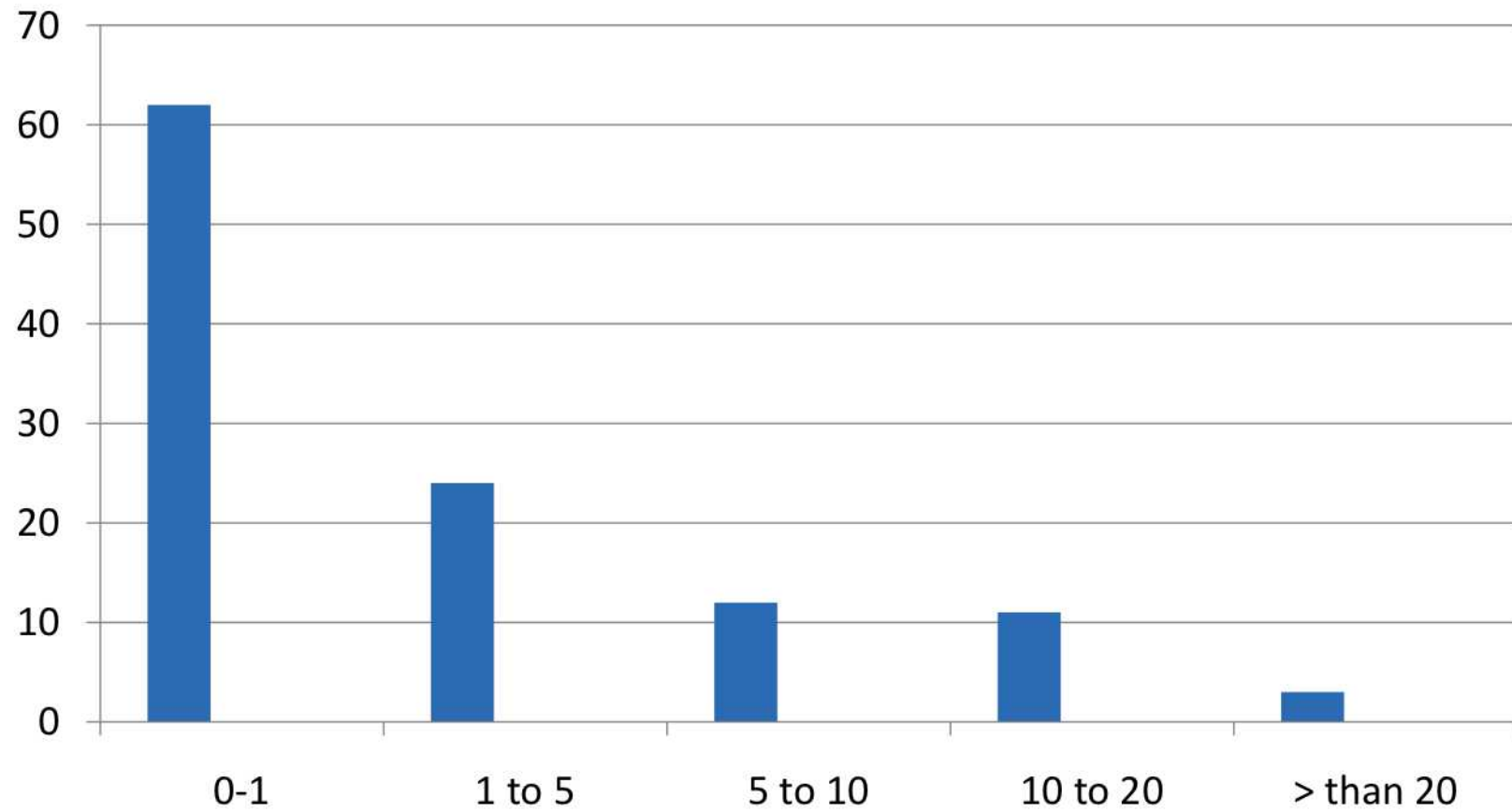


Smart City?

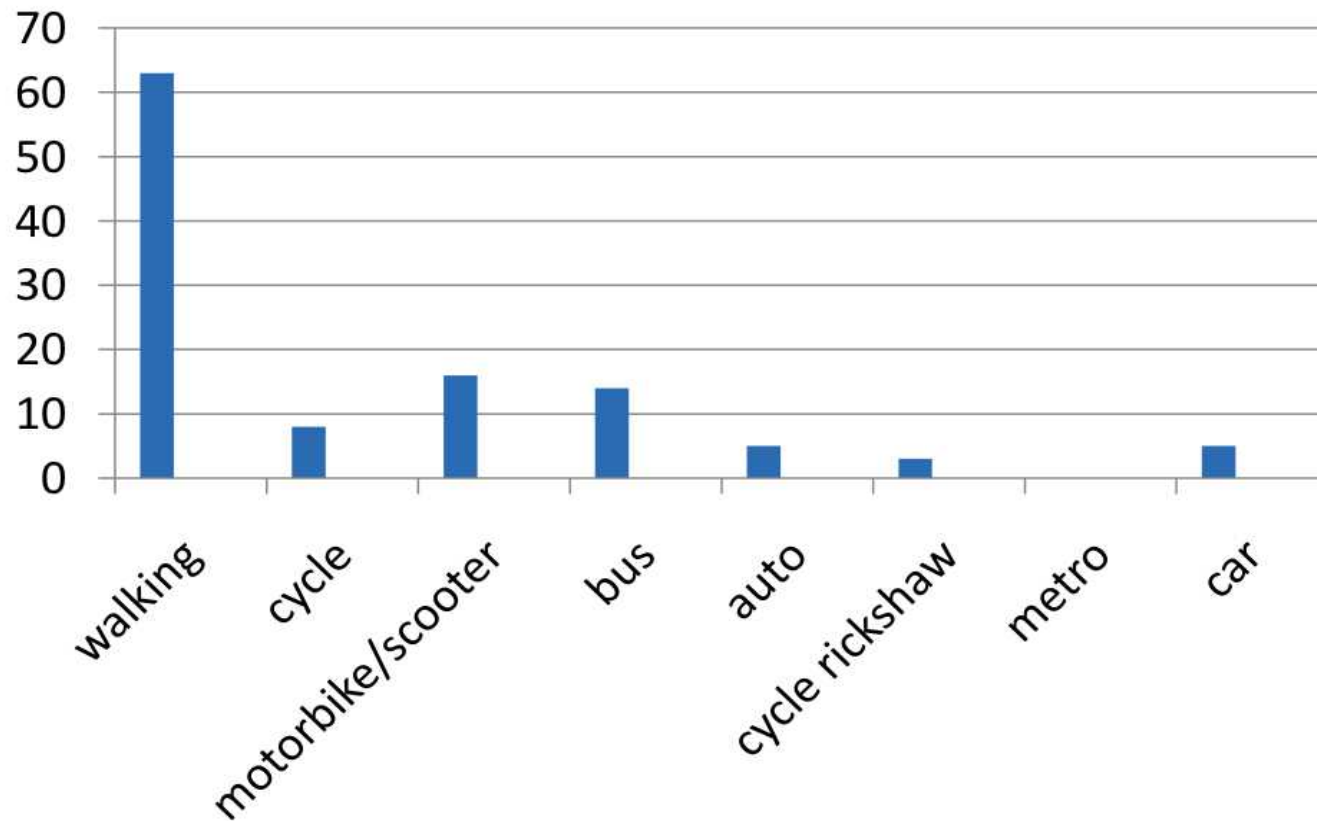
Live and/or Work in Taimoor Nagar



Distance travelled for work



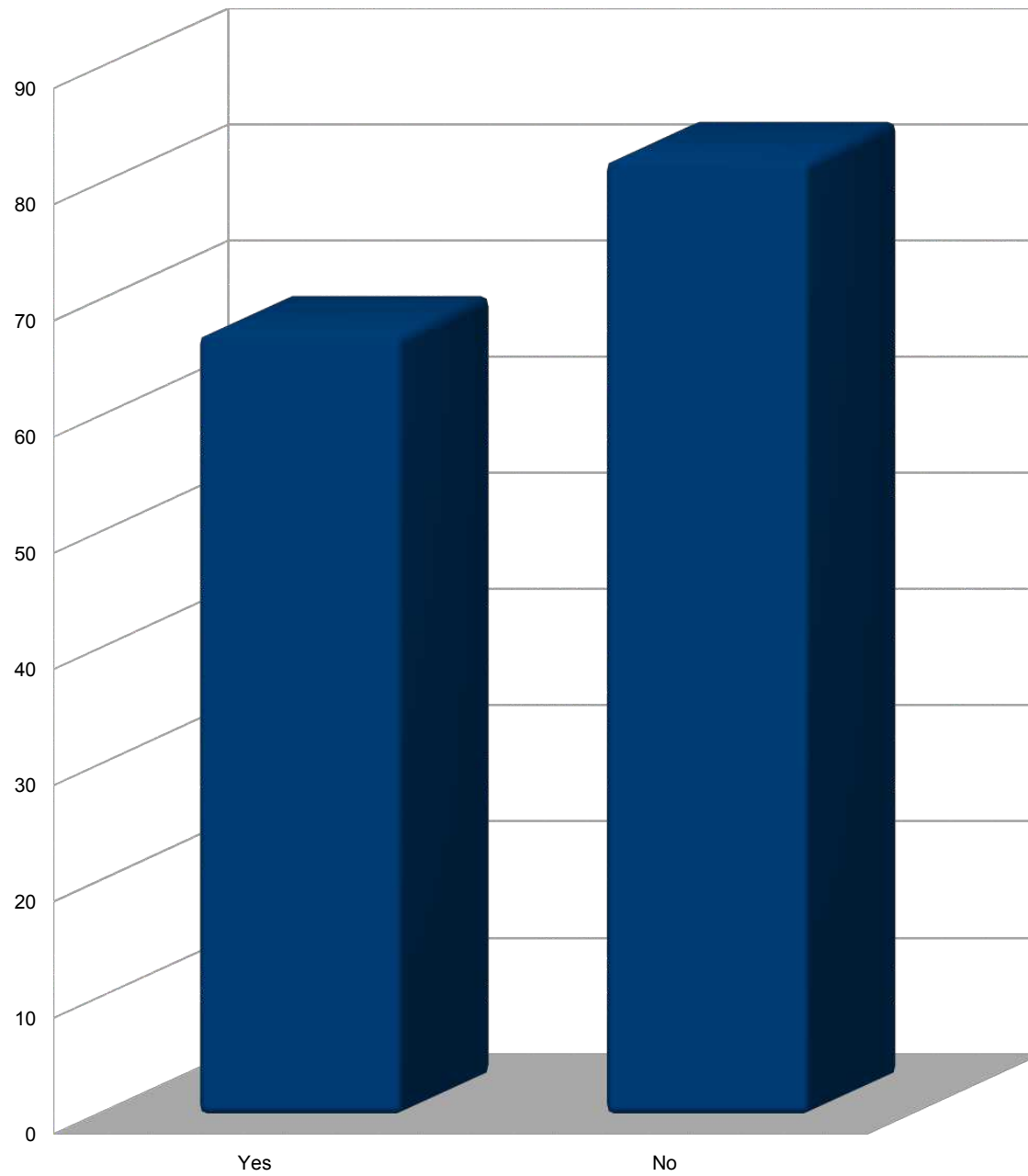
Mode of transport used



117 respondents



Own a Business



Work in Taimoor Nagar

Maid/Cook

Driver

Daily Wage Labourer

Kabadi/Sweeper

Lawyer

Handcart (Theli) Based Business

Stall-based business like tea stall, pan stall

Shop keeper (kirana, chemist etc)

Dairy farmer/milk seller

Tailor

Embroidery/Zardosi

Carpenter

Welder

Barber

Leather Stitching

Doctor

Tuitions

Karate Coach/Gym trainer

Student

Government Job

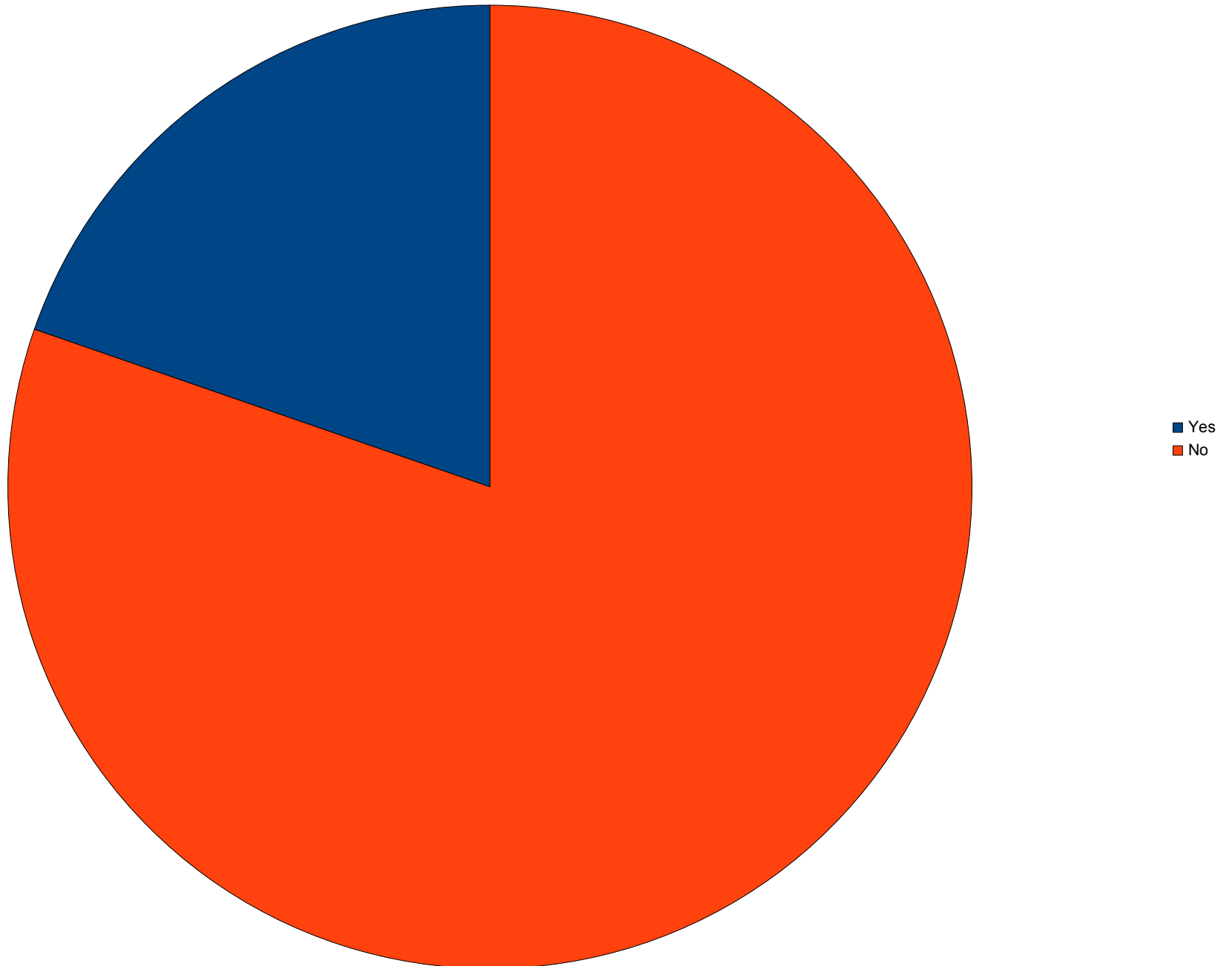
Private sector salaried job

Big Shop or other business

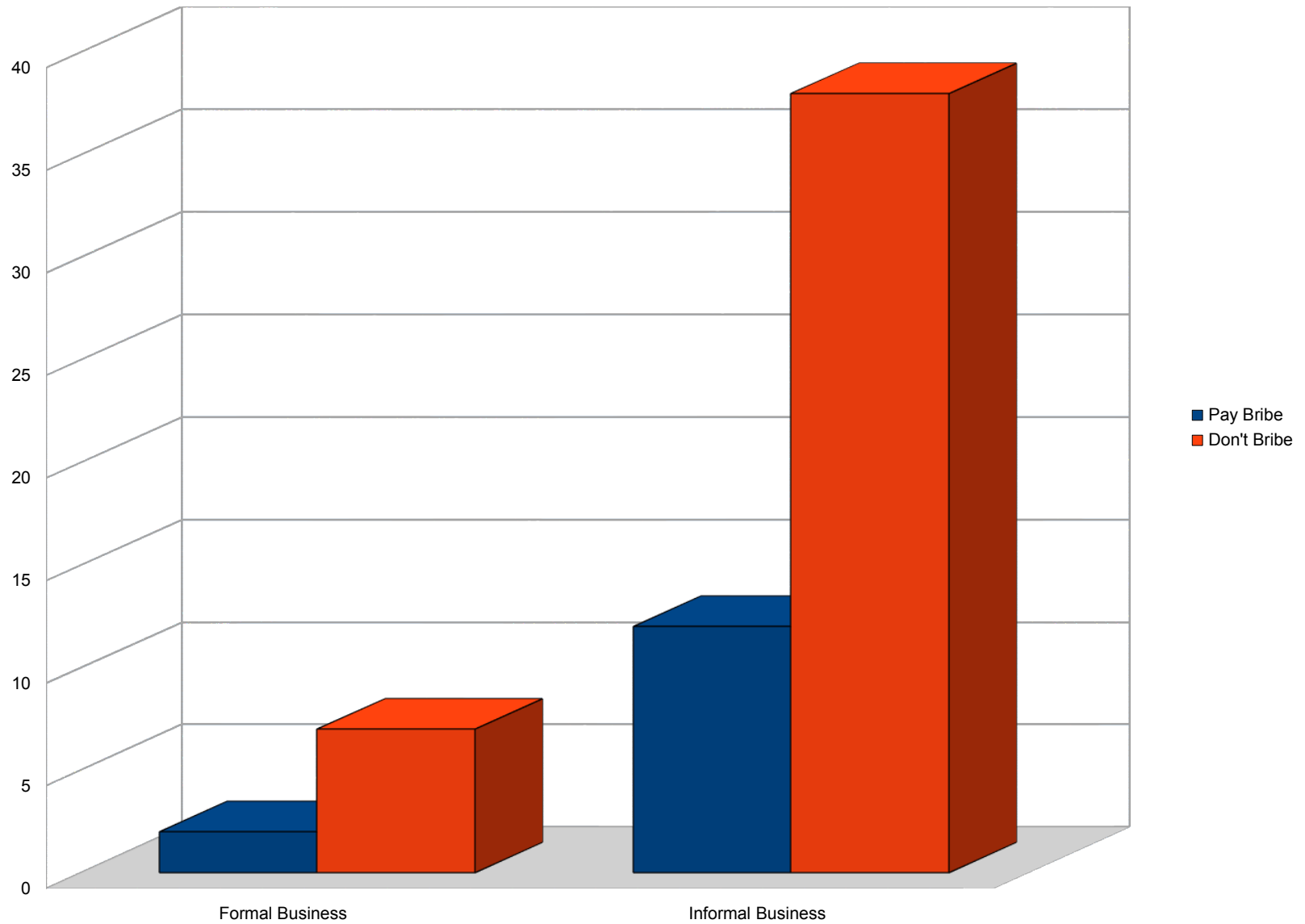
Landlord

Property Dealer

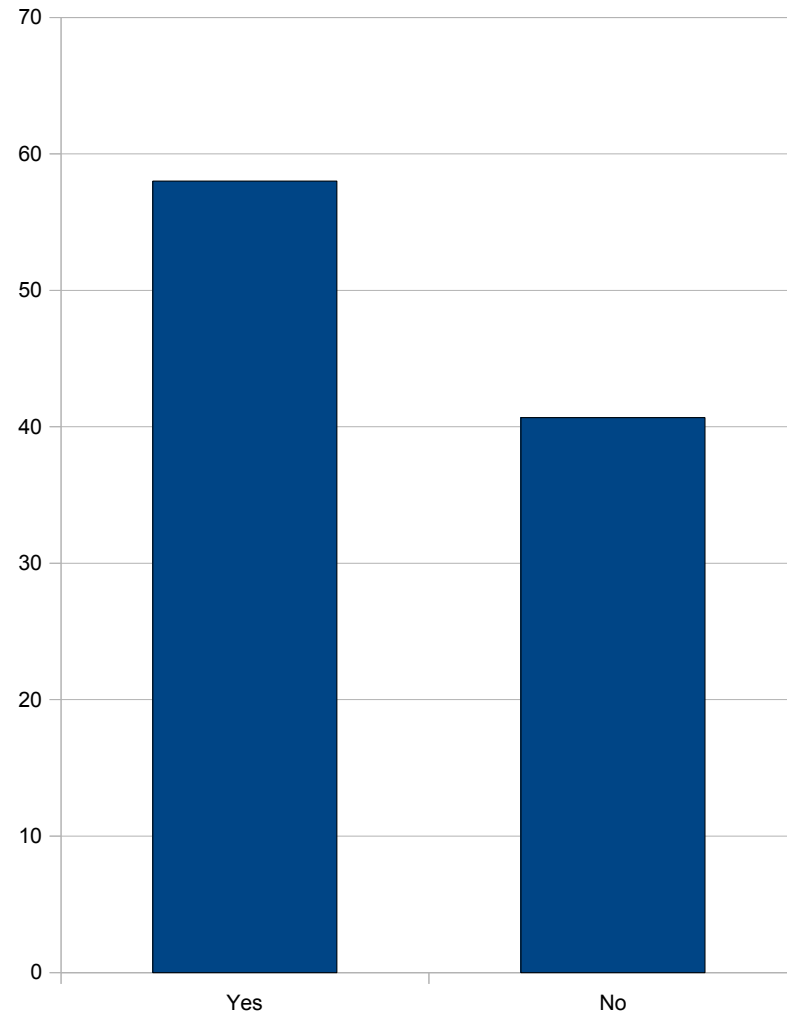
Is Your Business Formal?



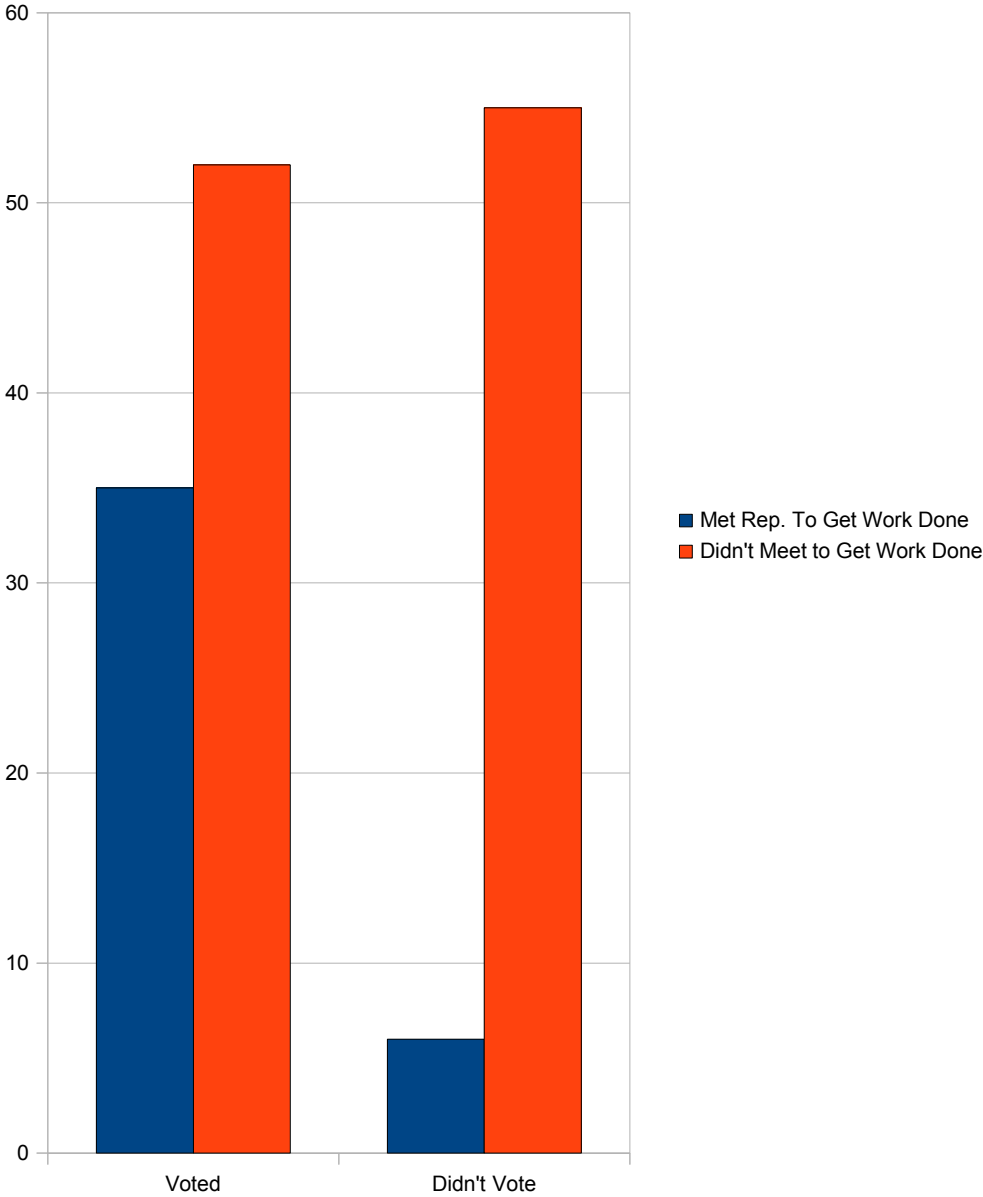
Bribes: Formal vs Informal



Did you Vote in the Assembly Elections? (%)



Met MLA/Councilor to Get Work Done



Local Democracy: A Cow Story

1. Govt acquires land from Dairy Farmers through Eminent Domain (for river channelization)
2. Land lies fallow. Dairy farmers continue grazing cattle there.
3. Farmer builds sheds for cattle
4. Local MLA arranges for water, electricity and road access to sheds for the cows.

Pay Attention to the Electric Pole



Cow Politics

Farmer builds a hut for overnight guard

- Then converts part of sheds to rental housing for humans.
- Plots the land and sells it also.
- Unauthorized Colony of Cows becomes
Unauthorized Colony of Humans
- Cows move on to gentrify a new pasture

“Unauthorized Colony” Area



“Regularization” of Unauthorized Colonies

Five to Six million people – 30-35% – live in such over 1600 Unauthorized Colonies in Delhi

2012- Delhi govt approves 895 Unauthorized Colonies for Regularization, including Taimoor Nagar Extension.

